**2nd TRY at your RESEARCH TOPIC PROPOSAL:**

**revised research question(s) & expanded list of search terms**

**DUE no later than noon on Monday 7/18—upload to student page**

**Part 1: REVISE/REWRITE RESEARCH QUESTION(RQ)—**review steps 1 and 2 on original topic proposal handout—consider the *approach* and *rhetorical focus* most suitable for YOUR topic and what you want to know/learn about it. Then, rewrite your research question(s) to use some of the vocabulary associated with your approach and focus, if possible.

**Part 2: EXPANDED LIST OF SEARCH TERMS**—First, identify all the *key words or terms* in your revised research question (RQ) from Part 1. Then, follow these steps to expand your list by doing some preliminary research in *reference sources* to help you learn the basics of your topic as well as any specialized or common vocabulary associated with your topic to include on your list.

1. Brainstorm as many synonyms and similar terms for each *key word or term* from RQ.
2. Go to dictionary.com and use the *thesaurus* and *dictionary* to choose more synonyms for you key words and terms, and use the *reference* function to look up any *key terms or phrases* from your RQ and/or brainstorming from a. that are more than one word (and therefore cannot be found in the thesaurus or dictionary)
3. Use the online general reference sources *Wikipedia* and *About.com* to look up any key terms, words, and/or phrases from your RQ or brainstorming list from a. and b. These reference resources are *general* in nature—they are comprehensive online encylopedias that have a little information about thousands of topics, and therefore good places to get a “feel” for the basic history, background, issues, problems, debate, etc. associated with and important to your topic. In other words, build your basic knowledge foundation about your topic using these general sources before moving on to more specific reference sources available via the library website.
4. Go to MSU’s main library website at [www.lib.msu.edu](http://www.lib.msu.edu). Select “Resources” and then “E-Resources” from the drop-down menu. On the “E-Resources” page, you can select a reference database from the list of popular databases on the right side of the screen (see below for a list of the best ones). For a much more detailed list, select “Reference Tools” from the drop-down menu directly under the heading “Find Other E-Resources Including Indexes” in the center of the screen and then click on go. Here is a short list of the best reference databases to use: **Gale Virtual Reference Library, Oxford Reference, Reference Universe, and—if you have chosen a topic of “hot debate” with two clearly opposing sides—Opposing Viewpoints Center.** These reference *databases* are collections of dozens to thousands of different encyclopedias called *subject-specific encyclopedias*, which are more detailed than general references (like *Wikipedia*) and contain articles only on topics related to particular fields of study. Browse/skim through brief encyclopedia articles near the top of your results list to discover any additional background info/history, fundamental knowledge, and vocabulary associated with your topic. Add any new words, terms, and/or phrases to your list of search terms.

**Part 3: TYPE UP YOUR REVISED RQ & EXPANDED LIST OF SEARCH TERMS**

Underline, bold, italicize, and/or highlight the key words and terms in your RQ.

Make these key words and terms the headings for your expanded list of search terms.

Under each heading, list all the search terms you discovered in steps a., b., c., and d. above.

**Part 4: POST YOUR ASSIGNMENT TO YOUR STUDENT PAGE (USE PROPER FILE NAME PLEASE)**